

PART I: PREPARING FOR DEPLOYMENT

Service Members & Families:

Deployments, like world events, are subject to rapid and unexpected change. As a result, today's deployments are often less predictable, more frequent, and longer in duration. Additionally, the advent of imbedded reporters and 24 hour newsfeeds makes it more likely to, not only know that a loved one is in harm's way, but also have a front row seat to the action. These factors increase family stress, and present deployment readiness challenges such as managing separations, and successful reunions. Therefore, as your loved one prepares to deploy, a number of questions and concerns may arise.

The Family Readiness Program assists families in times of peace, crisis, and war with information that improves the quality of military family life, prepares families for extended deployment separations, sustains them during deployment, and facilitates smooth family reintegration following deployment.

These information vehicles inform families of available local, state and federal resources such as the DoD created [Pre-Deployment Guide](#), which provides information applicable to deploying active duty service members from all Service branches (active, National Guard and Reserve and their family members (spouses, children, and parents) who are preparing for or undergoing a deployment. The information in this Guide is presented in three major sections: Understanding Deployment, Preparing for Deployment, and Knowing Your Benefits.

In addition, [Deployment Connections](#), an online handbook for coping with deployment, makes it easier to find deployment-related information and support services for active and reserve military members and their families during all phases of deployment and mobilization. Deployment Connections provides information regarding availability of family support services, and points of contact for further assistance. It also provides links to age and grade specific websites for children and young adults. And the [National Resource Center](#) provides a host of information to military members and their families, ranging from general to very service specific.

We understand that you may have immediate questions. Below, please find Frequently Asked Questions about Deployment programs and services provided by Military OneSource.

[What Impact Does Deployment Have on Troops and Families and are there resources available](#)

[How Does one Prepare for Deployment](#)

[What is the Emotional Cycle of Deployment](#)

[What is a Family Care Plan and Do I need one before I Deploy](#)

[Is Back-up Care Planning for Children of Deployed Service Members a Good Idea](#)

This information sheet was prepared by the USCENTCOM Family Readiness Program (FRP) to address those questions and access Service Members and Families to resources supportive of deployment readiness and the mobile military lifestyle. The Service Member & Family Support Division has inputted contact information for local families.

PART II: COPING WITH DEPLOYMENTS

Dear Service & Family Members:

Coping during a loved one's deployment absence is sometimes difficult and often presents unexpected challenges. The Family Readiness Program assists families in times of peace, crisis, and war with information that improves the quality of military family life, prepares families for extended deployment separations, sustains them during deployment, and facilitates smooth family reintegration following deployment.

Coping During Deployment

When a loved one is deployed, family members must address everything from the emotional turmoil of children, added household chores, financial and other responsibilities -- often alone and while coping with their own anxieties, fears and loneliness. This can be quite challenging, especially in the absence of a supportive partner. Add an unexpected emergency and the challenge can feel overwhelming. However, available resources assist with everything from sudden deployments and solo parenting to lawn care and taxes.

Deployments can be sudden, emotionally charged and overwhelming. Fortunately, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), through its Force Health Protection site, provides several [Total Force Service Family Programs](#) which support the family readiness of all service branches. The information in this section assists them in preparing for and coping with deployments. In addition to links for each of the services, it also provides information for children, locating service members and deployment entitlements. [Army Medical Health](#) provides a similar program. And an entire [Deployment Health & Family Readiness Library](#) of pamphlets, products and resources are available for download.

Solo Parenting

Solo Parenting during a spouse's deployment can be difficult for both the care giver and child. A number of on-line programs and publications are available to help kids cope and remain close to the deployed parent. These include: [Youth and Deployment: A Guide for Survival](#); [Children & Deployment Staying in Touch](#); [Your Children and Separation](#), a resource for parents to use in preparing their children for family separations due to deployment; [Dad's Away Again](#) provides suggestions for keeping kids and the deployed parent connected, while [Military Parents - The Part-Time Single Parent](#) addresses parenting issues faced by single parents while deployed. In [Double Duty: Staying Connected with your kids when you're a deployed dad](#), fatherhood expert and former Marine Armin Brott talks about ways to stay close with your child from before you deploy to after you return. [Helping Children Cope with Fears of War and Terrorism](#) offers important coping strategies for K-6 children. And [Our Military Kids](#) provides tangible support to children of deployed National Guard and Reserve personnel as well as to children of severely injured service members through grants for enrichment activities and tutoring. Finally, [Military Youth on the Move](#) is a DoD site offering information and tools for military kids facing transitions - deployments, moving, divorce.

Deployed Member's Communications with Children & Spouses

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The deploying member may also experience separation anxiety. A number of [Communication Tools](#), and [Counseling Options](#) available through [Military OneSource](#), also local resources through the [Service Member & Family Support Division](#) helps keep families prepared and close by offering pre-separation briefs and reintegration programs. In addition, [United Through Reading](#) is a program that helps deployed parents stay connected with their children by creating read-aloud videotapes.

Coping with Loneliness, Stress, Anxiety, and Fear

[Managing the Emotional Cycle of Deployment When Your Spouse is Deployed](#) is difficult. However, [Military OneSource](#) is a 24/7 service with FREE resources to help you [Cope with Stress Anxiety & Fear](#) associated with balancing the added responsibilities of home, ensuring the physical and emotional well-being of anxious family members and maintaining a long distance relationship. In addition, they recently released a downloadable [Twelve Minute De-Stressing Drill](#). Finally, the video [Returning From the War Zone: A Guide for Families](#), provides excellent insight from actual family members.

Life Goes On and Things Happens

When the military member deploys, life goes on and things happens. For instance, lawns continue to grow, sometimes out of control; and fortunately, organizations such as [GreenC are for Troops](#), a nationwide outreach program coordinated by Project EverGreen, connects local lawn and landscape firms with families of deployed service members. ID cards unexpectedly expire and you may need to renew an ID card at the [Military Service Center](#) or at an Armory near you. And, without exception, taxes, requiring special instructions for those serving in the AOR, are due. Military OneSource provides [FREE Tax Assistance](#) and the very helpful [IRS Website](#) provides:

- Questions and answers on exclusions, extensions and other tax benefits available to members of the Armed Forces serving in a combat zone.
- [Publication 3](#), Armed Forces' Tax Guide, which covers the special tax situations of active members of the U.S. Armed Forces.
- Several recent news releases and notices, including [Tax Tip 2003-41](#), Reservists, New Enlistees May Get Deferral for Back Taxes; news release [IR-2002-18](#), Tax Relief for Troops in Afghanistan Combat Zone; [Notice 2002-17](#), Tax Relief for those Involved in Operation Enduring Freedom.
- A [special e-mail address](#) for members of the U.S. Armed Forces, their spouses, authorized agents or representatives, which can be used to notify the IRS about someone serving in a combat zone. (Watch the site for 2009 updates)

In addition to pre-deployment, deployment and post- deployment issues, families may also face unexpected emergencies that give rise to a financial crisis. It's opportune that so many organizations stand ready to assist, among them: the [Service Member & Family Support Division](#) and the [Air Force Aid Society](#) provides worldwide emergency assistance, sponsors education assistance programs, and offers an array of base community enhancement programs that improve quality of life for Airmen and their families; [America Supports You](#), a Department of Defense Community Relations initiative and its site currently lists more than 350 non-profit groups that are devoted to helping service men and women Scroll down to "support" on the right and click on "America Supports You"; [American Red Cross: Military Services](#) provides information on Red Cross support for military families. Twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year, the Red Cross quickly sends emergency communications to deployed service members on behalf of their family [Army Emergency Relief](#), the Army's

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emergency financial assistance organization offers an array of financial interventions. [Reserve Aid](#), provides financial support to the families of Reserve Service Members from all services, who have been called to active duty and are experiencing financial difficulty. [Operation Homefront](#), supports US Troops by providing assistance to families of deployed service members; and [National Guard Family Programs](#), is a one-stop-shop for the National Guard.

PART III: REUNION & REINTEGRATION

Dear Service and Family Members:

Waiting family members experience severe stress when coping with a loved one's deployment. However, the less well known stress and difficulties encountered when a Service Member returns are often just as profound. Without treatment and support, this stress can lead to divorce, substance abuse, unemployment, behavior problems in children, and other related issues that can have a lasting impact on family. However, a number of excellent programs are available to assist both Service members and families.

For instance, ["Coming Home": A Guide for Service Members Returning from Mobilization/Deployment](#) addresses how to have a successful homecoming and readjustment from the service member's perspective, while ["Coming Home": A guide for Spouses of Service Members Returning from Mobilization/Deployment](#) addresses the issue from the non-military spouse's perspective. [After Deployment](#) a mental wellness and behavioral health website, also addresses post deployment issues. And the [TRICARE Mental Health Resource Center](#), which assists in determining when help is required, locating a provider and making an appointment, recently launched the TRICARE Assistance Program (TRIAP) is just one of several ways to get convenient, confidential help through a licensed behavioral health counselor. Services are available to any active duty service member (ADSM) in the United States, their spouse, and other eligible family members 18 years of age or older. All that's needed is a computer, Webcam and the associated software. TRIAP "visits" are unlimited and include assessments, short-term counseling and, if the TRIAP counselor determines more specialized care is necessary, referral to a more comprehensive level of care. Get details and get linked up to the appropriate TRICARE region at <http://www.tricare.mil/TRIAP>. Help is also available to military families through dozens of other options: online, phone and face-to-face. Click to <http://www.tricare.mil/mentalhealth> for additional TRICARE mental health benefits information, links, programs, assistance phone numbers and downloads, including the comprehensive "A TRICARE Guide: Understanding Behavioral Health Care."

If concerned with a child or adolescent's adjustment, the [American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry](#) website provides information on adjusting to the return of a deployed service member as does the [American Psychiatric Association - Healthy Minds, Healthy Lives](#) website, which offers information on post traumatic stress disorder and helping children cope. (Search under PTSD)

[Battlemind - Armor for Your Mind](#), designed for warriors, leaders, spouses and families, reflects a strength-based, positive approach to Warrior behavioral health. And the [Department of Defense Reserve Affairs](#) Office, dedicated to today's Reserve force, provides information about the policies, programs, and initiatives that OSD/Reserve Affairs manages for the National Guard and Reserve Components. Also, the [Deployment Health & Family Readiness Library \(DH&FR\)](#) offers Service members, families, leaders, Health Care providers, and veterans an easy way to find deployment health and family readiness information. Visit this site for an online library of current deployment health information, including mental health, or call 800-497-6261. And the [Real Warriors](#) Campaign is an initiative launched by the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury to promote the processes of building resilience, facilitating recovery and supporting

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reintegration of returning service members. [SOFAR: Strategic Outreach to Families of All Reservists](#) also provides free psychological support to families and loved ones of Army Reservists and National Guard deployed in Afghanistan, Iraq and Kuwait.

For children, [Military OneSource](#) and the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) developed [Support for Military Children & Adolescents Programs](#) that includes links to, [Sesame Street "Talk, Listen, Connect: Helping Families Cope with Military Deployment"](#), [Military Youth Coping With Separation](#), and [Mr. Poe and Friends Discuss Family Reunion After Deployment](#).

[TRICARE Reserve Select \(TRS\)](#)

TRICARE Reserve Select is a premium-based TRICARE health plan offered for purchase by certain members and former members of the Reserve Component and their families, if specific eligibility requirements are met. [Veterans and Families](#)

A community service and support organization that assists veterans and their families in successfully transitioning from deployment to home, and from military to civilian life. Finally, the [Wounded Warrior National Resource Guide](#), an online tool for wounded, ill and injured Service Members, Veterans, their families and those who support them, provides access to thousands of services and resources at the national, state and local levels that support recovery, rehabilitation and community reintegration. The National [Veteran's Suicide Prevention Hotline](#) was founded by the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) [Veterans Health Administration \(VHA\)](#) to ensure veterans in emotional crisis have free, 24/7 access to trained counselors. Veterans can call the Lifeline number, 1-800-273-TALK (8255), and press "1" to be routed to the Veterans Suicide Prevention Hotline.

For more information on local programs and support, please contact North Dakota's [Service Member & Family Support Division](#) at 1-800-242-4940.

“More than a program, family readiness is a promise to those going forward that rear-assigned families will be properly prepared, fully informed and well supported.” ~C.Q. Tillery

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